

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 SS-07 AID-01 NSC-06 /022 W

----- 015768

R 130930Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9986

INFO AMEMBASY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

-EMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU 2926

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, EAID, NG

SUBJECT: VISIT OF STAFFDEL DE HAAN

REF: STATE 18768

SUMMARY:

STAFFDEL DE HAAN ARRIVED NIAMEY FEBRUARY 8 ON SCHEDULE AND SPENT FEBRUARY 9 AND 10 ON FIELD TRIPS TO AREAS NORTH AND EAST OF NIAMEY. STAFFDEL WAS ABLE TO SEE VILLAGE MARKETS, FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN OPERATION, MEDICAL CLINICS, RICE AND VEGETABLE PLANTATIONS APNG NIGER RIVER AND CARE-MANAGED VILLAGE AGRICULTURAL PROJECT IN WHICH AID AND PCV7S PARTICIPATING.

GON ARRANGED FOR STAFFDEL TO CALL FEB 11 ON VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT SANI SIDO, FOREIGN MINISTER DJERMAKOYE, PVINISTER OF RURAL ECONOMY BAYERE MOUSSA, FORMER MER MINISTER CAPTAIN ALI SAIBOU, AND OPVN OFFICIALS. IN ADDITION, STAFFDEL SAW UN REP ROTIVAL AND MET WITH VOLAG REPS. STAFFDEL SEEMED SATISFIED WITH SCHEDULE AND IMPRESSED BY GON LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WELCOMING STAFFDEL, FONMIN NOTED THAT NIGER GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE WERE DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OF US INTERST IN NIGER

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EVER SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE AND ESPECIALLY GENEROUS ASSISTANCE

DURING DROUGHT YEARS. HE DESCRIBED RELATIONS BETWEEN UN AND NIGER

AS VERY CLOSE AND WITHOUT PROBLEMS. TOUCHING ON NIGER'S FOREIGN POLICY, HE SAID THAT ITS GENERAL THRUST WAS DETERMINED BY OAU PRINCIPLES AND AS A POOR DEVELOPING COUNTRY NIGER COULD NOT AFFORD LUXURY OF ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY EXCEPT AS IT PERTAINED TO COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT. WITH PORTUGUESE QUESTION FADING FROM SCENE, OAU'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WOULD DECLINE AND HE FELT ORGANIZATION SHOULD CONCENTRATE IN FUTURE ON ECONOMIC MATTERS AND DEVELOPMENT. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION REGARDING HOW BEST TO CHANNEL ASSISTANCE, HE SAID GON WAS CURRENTLY THINKING OF TRINAGULAR ARRANGEMENTS INVOLVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FROM OIL PRODUCING ARAB STATES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WEST WHICH TOGETHER COULD TACKEL SOME OF NIGER'S NEEDS. HE ALSO SAW ROLE FOR BOTH BILATERAL AND REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, CITING LIPTAKO-GOURMA PROJECT INVOLVING MALI, UPPER VOLTA, AND NIGER AS AN EXAMPLE OF LATTER. HE ADDED THAT SHOULD OIL OR OTHER MINERAL RESOURCES BE DISCOVERED IN COMMERCIAL QUANTITIES, NIGER' FOREIGN POLICY WOULD NECESSARILY BECOME MORE ACTIVE.

2. STAFFDEL SPENT HOUR AND 15 MINUTES WITH VICE PRESIDENT WHO FIRST BRIEFED VISITORS ON REASONS FOR MILITARY TAKEOVER LAST YEAR. HE SAID MILITARY WERE SPECIALISTS AND SHOULD NOT NORMALLY INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN POLITICS, BUT POLITICAL STAGNATION AND FAMINE CONDITIONS FORCED THEM TO MOVE LAST APRIL. UPON SEIZING POWER, NEW GOVERNMENT'S FIRST CONCERNS WERE: 1) TO INSURE THAT FOOD GRAINS, WHICH WERE POURING INTO COUNTRY, REACHED PEOPLE WHO BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT WERE STARVING; 2) TO MOVE PEOPLE BACK TO LAND WITH ENOUGH FOOD AND SEED TO INSURE THEIR LIVELIHOOD DURING RAINS WHILE THEY CULTIVATED THEIR LAND; AND 3) TO LOOK TO HELATH NEEDS OF PEOPLE.

3. FAMINE WAS AVERTED AND NOW GON IS ENGAGED IN DESIGNING DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOCUSING ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND NEEDS OF NOMAD POPULATION. MEANWHILE, GON PRUCHASING FOOD GRAINS FROM FARMERS AT GENEROUS PRICES TO AVOID SPECULATION AND TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO FARMERS IN ORDER TO DEVELOP

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RESERVES FOR COMING MONTHS AND UNTIL NEXT HARVEST. GON WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL IT HS SIX YEARS OF RESERVES. LOOKING AHEAD, GON BELIEVES THE GREATEST PRIORITY IS INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION AND FIRST STEP TO ACHIEVE THAT

GOAL INVOLVES MASTERY OVER WATER. IN THIS CONNECTION, SANI SIDO RECALLED HIS VISIT TO CHINA LAST SUMMER. HE SAID THERE WERE MANY OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINA AND

NIGER BUT NIGER VEGHT BE ABLE TO LEARN ABOUT UTILIZATION OF WATER AND OF LAND FROM CHINA. AS FOR COMMUNISM, THIS DID NOV BOTHER HIM. NIGER WAS A RELIGIOUS COUNTRY WHERE COMMUNISM HAS NO APPEAL.

4. ASKED ABOUT EFFECTS OF POPULATION GROWTH ON STANDARDS OF LIVING, SANI SIDO SAID HE DID NOT CONSIDER THIS A PROBLEM FOR NIGER. COUNTRY HAD VAST AREAS WHICH WERE UNDER UTILIZED, WHICH IN NORMAL TIMES COULD FEED PEOPLE EVEN WITHOUT FERTILIZER AND WHICH WAS PRIMARILY DRY FARMING. WITH BETTER UTILIZATION OF LAND AND WATER, INTRODUCTION OF FERTILIZER AND GREATER USE OF HUMAN RESOURCES WHICH NOW UNDEREMPLOYED, EXCEPT DURING RAINS, NIGER COULD DOUBLE OR TRIPLE ITS FOOD PRODUCTION, BUILD UP ITS RESERVES, HAVE SOME FOR EXPORT AND STILL HAVE ENOUGH LEFT OVER FOR EXPANDING POPULATION.

5. ASKED WHETHER SOME DAY SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE ITS EXPERTISE TO AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT, SANI SIDO SAID DAY MIGHT COME WHEN SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERTISE COULD BE PUT TO WORK BUT ONLY WHEN MONORITY COMMUNITY STOPPED EXPLOITING MAJORITY COMMUNITY. HE SAID HE VIEWED THE PROBLEM IN ECONOMIC NOT RECAL TERMS AND ONCE SOUTH AFRICA WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE BLACK AS A MAN AND ACCORD HIM EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, THEN NIGER COULD ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

6 REGARDING NIGER'S NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM, SANI SIDO SAID THAT NEW REGIME ACCORDED HEALTH HIGH PRIORITY AS EVIDENCED BY GON DECISION TO GIVE HEALTH MINSITRY 22 PER CENT OF OPERATINGXUDGZKQMBCKROMMMENT: ACCORDING EMBASSY STATISTICS

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 SS-07 AID-01 NSC-06 /022 W

----- 019325

R 130030Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9987

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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MOH GETS 7.5 PER CENT OF OPERATING BUDGET. END COMMENT.)
HEALTH MINISTRY HAS TAKEN HARD LOOK AT MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTTURED WITHIN COUNTRY AND IS GRADUALLY RESTRUCTURING MEDICAL SERVICES. DURING DROUGHT LOCAL RESOURCES HAD BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY FOREIGN MEDICAL TEAMS BUT IN LONG RUN GON HOPED TO NIGERIENIZE MEDICAL STAFFS. TRAINING WAS BEING GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY. MEANWHILE TWO MOBILE TEAMS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED--ONE OPERATING IN EASTERN PART OF COUNTRY AND OTHER IN WEST. THESE MOVED COVVOYS OF ABOUT 15 CARS WITH WIDE RANGE OF MEDICAL SERVICES AND CONCENTRATED ON PREVENTIVE MEDICINE. FOR EXAMPLE, WESTERN TEAM HAD RECENTLY BEEN ASSIGNED TASK OF INOCULATING ALL EL HADJ PILGRIMS RETURNING FROM MECCA WHERE THEY HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO CHOLERA AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA.

4. SANI SIDO ENDED MEETING BY REITERATING HIS PLEASURE AT MEETING MEMBERS OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S STAFF. HE SAID PRESIDENT KENNEDY WOULD BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS COMPASSIONATE INTEREST IN WELFARE OF MANKIND AND THIS WAS REASON NIGER WISHED HONOR HIM AND US BY NAMING BRIDGE ACROSS NIGER RIVER FOR HIM. SANI SIDO NOTED THAT DURING 60 YEARS OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION, FRENCH HAD NOT CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO BUILD BRIDGE ACROSS RIVER, WHILE IN FEW YEARS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH DISINTERESTED AND DISTANT US, THAT COUNTRY HAD COME TO NIGER'S ASSISTANCE FOR THIS PURPOSE AND HAD MADE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO GROWTH OF CAPITAL AND

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OF COUNTRY. THIS GENEROUS AND POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION BY US WOULD LONG BE REMEMBERED.

8. A T MEETING WITH UNDP REPRESENTATIVE ROTIVAL, HE SUMMARIZED GENERAL THRUST OF UNDP PROGRAMS HERE WHICH FOCUSING ON NATION BUILDING PROGRAMS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DESCRIBED HIS DUTIES AS GENERAL COORDINATOR OF DROUGHT RELIEF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM FOREIGN DONORS. ASKED ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE, ROTIVAL FELT THAT REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS CILSS COULD PEPFORM USEFUL COORDINATING AND INFORMATIONAL ROLE ESPECAILLY WITH DONORS WHO WERE NOT REPRESENTED LOCALLY BUT EXPRESSED VIEW THAT CQERATIONAL RESPONSISIBILITY WAS MORE EFFECTIVELY CARRIED OUT IF PLACED IN HANDS OF MISSIONS IN EACH COUNTRY.

9. MINISTER OF RURAL ECONOMY BAYERE MOUSSA, BRIEFED STAFFDEL IN GENERAL TERMS REGARDING MINISTRY'S DROUGHT RELIEF ACTIVITIES OK PEST YEAR AND FOOD NEEDS UNTIL NEXT

HARVEST. MINISTER REFERRED ANSWERES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO SUBSEQUENT MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE IN OFFICE OF GQVN AND WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY CAPTAIN ALI SAIBOU, FORMER MINISTER OF RURAL ECONOMY, SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOU AND OPVN OFFICIALS. ANNOU REPRTED ON VISIT TO NIGER OF MULTI-DONOR MISSION, SUMMARIZED ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS WELL AS THOSE OF GON AND POINTED OUT DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN MDM AND GON CONCLUSIONS. HE SAID GON REQUIRED 1,100,000 TONS OF FOOD GRAINS AGAINST WHICH NIGER HAD IN TVND 900,000 TONS OF GRAINS AND 67,500 TONS OF OTHER EDIBLES LEAVING A FEFICIT OF 132,500 TONS. TO DATEAN APPROXIMATELY 50,000 TONS HAVE BEEN PLEDGED OF WHICH 25,000 IS FROM US LEAVING APPROXIMATELY 80,000 TONS STILL REQUIRED.

10. STAFFDEL ALSO BRIEFED ON OPVN'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GRAIN STABILIZATION AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION. OPVN NOW CONCENTRATING ON IZRCNLILJG#GRAIHAND STOCKPILING IT IN FORWARD AREAS WHICH WERE DIFFICULT TO REACH DURING THE RAINY SEASON. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION, CAPTAIN ALI SAIBOU SAID THAT AS YET THERE HAD BEEN NO DRIFT OF POPULATION BACK TO REFUGEE OR URBAN CENTERS. PEOPLE STILL SEEM TO HAVE ENOUGH TO LIVE ON BUT THE SITUATION WOULD PROBABLY CHANGE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

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AND SOME BUILDUP OF REFUGEE CENTERS CAN BE EXPECTED, POSSIBLY STARTING IN APRIL.

11. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS IMPRESSION STAFFDEL DEPARTED SATISFIED WITH SCHEDULE AND IMPRESSED BY GON'S SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE AND DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE LOT OF POPLE.
END COMMENT.HECK

NOTE BY OCT: # AS RECEIVED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greenet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NIAMEY00594
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750053-0329
From: NIAMEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750246/aaaabpdr.tel
Line Count: 260
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 18768
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greenet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <11 DEC 2003 by greenet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF STAFFDEL DE HAAN
TAGS: OTRA, NG, (DE HAAN, DALE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006